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THE WHITE HOUSE

CONFIDENTIAL - GDS WASHINGTON

March 30, 1975


CHRON

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Major General John A. Wickham, Jr., USA
Military Assistant to the Secretary
Department of Defense

SUBJECT: Significant Military Exercise HALCON VISTA X

There is no objection to Significant Military Exercise
HALCON VISTA X.


Brent Scowcroft
Lieutenant General, USAF
Deputy Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

OSD REVIEWED 22-Mar-2011: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION.

DOS REVIEWED 21 MAR 2011 NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

CONFIDENTIAL - GDSACTION
March 27, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

GENERAL SCOWCROFT

FROM:

STEPHEN LOW *SL*

SUBJECT:

Significant Military Exercise
HALCON VISTA X

Attached at Tab A for your signature is a memo to General Wickham approving the HALCON VISTA X exercise. It is a joint U.S. - Colombian coastal surveillance / intercept exercise to which I have no objection.

Defense briefing on the exercise is at Tab B.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the memo attached at Tab A.

Attachments:

Tab A: Memorandum to Gen. Wickham

Tab B: Defense briefing on subject exercise

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

26 MAR 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: Significant Military Exercise HALCON VISTA X

Three copies of a brief on the significant military exercise HALCON VISTA X are forwarded for approval in accordance with NSAM 316. This exercise has been coordinated with the State Department and the U.S. Information Agency. They have raised no objections.

A summary of the politico-military scenario for this exercise appears at paragraph 8 of the brief.

The recommended general public information policy is set forth in paragraph 14 of the exercise brief.

Please note that the critical date for Presidential cancellation is 2 April.

(W)

JOHN A. WICKHAM, JR.
MAJOR GENERAL, USA
MILITARY ASSISTANT

Enclosure
a/s

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WHEN WITH ATTACHMENTS

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 As per instructions on document
 By GDS/POD Date 3/94

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US SOUTHERN COMMAND

BRIEF OF A SIGNIFICANT MILITARY EXERCISE

1. (U) Name of Exercise. HALCON VISTA X.
2. (U) Type. JCS-coordinated, combined surveillance/intercept exercise.
3. (C) Aims. To test and improve Colombian surveillance/intercept capabilities, systems, and SOP; to exercise combined forces in coordinated tracking and intercept of simulated subversive air and surface units attempting incursions into Colombia's Caribbean coastal areas; to promote regional cooperation; and to improve cooperation and understanding between US and Colombian Armed Forces.
4. (U) Dates. ^{1-3 May} ~~15-18 April~~ 1975. *Rem*
5. (U) Critical Date for Presidential Decision to Cancel Exercise. ~~15 March 1975.~~ ^{2 April 1975} *Rem*
6. (C) Political Implications.
 - a. US commitments to allies for conduct of exercise. Tentative agreements for conduct of exercise: travel, per diem, charter of suspect vessel, POL, consumables, loan of communications equipment, observers (2 officers), and participation of 3 USNR P2 aircraft as assigned by COMNAVAIRRESFOR. These aircraft will be based and operated from Colombia.
 - b. Date commitments made. No firm commitments made. All arrangements are tentative.
 - c. Other political implications. Due to sensitive relations between Colombia and Venezuela, similar but separate exercises have been conducted with Venezuela in the past.
7. (U) Geographical Area. Caribbean Sea and contiguous Colombian coastal areas, excluding disputed areas near border.

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Classified by USCINCSO
 SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
 SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
 AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO
 YEAR INTERVALS
 DECLASSIFIED ON DECEMBER 31, 1981

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8. (U) Political-Military Scenario Summary. Scenario contains no political assumptions or connotations.

9. (C) Directing Headquarters.

a. COMUSNAVSO is USSOUTHCOM's coordinating authority for US support to and participation in the exercise.

b. The Colombians will exercise overall control of their assigned forces from the General Headquarters of the Commander of Military Forces in Bogota. Subordinate to this commander will be an Exercise Control Group which commands the "Infiltrator Forces" and coordinates "Counterinsurgency Element/Infiltrator Force" interactions. The Control Group will be based at the Naval Headquarters, Bogota. Also subordinate to the Commander of Military Forces will be a counterinsurgency element (Friendly Force Commander) based at Headquarters, Naval Forces, Atlantic, in Cartagena. Assigned USNR P2 aircraft will "operate as requested by" the Air Force component commander of the counterinsurgency element. These aircraft will be based in Colombia and will remain at least 10 kilometers from the Colombian/Venezuelan border at all times.

10. (U) Participating Commands, Headquarters, and Forces.

a. US. Three US Naval Reserve (USNR) P2 patrol aircraft, with necessary air and ground crews (13 officers and 27 enlisted) are the US Forces directly participating in the exercise. USSOUTHCOM participation includes the loan of communications equipment, exercise observers (2 officers) and limited materiel and transportation support.

b. Allied. To date, Colombia has not assigned forces to participate in this exercise. It is anticipated that Colombian force assignments will be approximately the same as those in last year's exercise. Last year's forces were 6 destroyer type ships, 4 small patrol craft, 1 tug, 1 Coast Guard vessel, 2 battalions of Army troops, 1 battalion of Marines, and 12 aircraft. In addition, various paramilitary forces such as customs officials and national police will participate. One small vessel of Colombian registry will be chartered to act as infiltrator ship.

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11. (U) Scope of Anticipated Participation.

- a. Other unified or specified commands. None.
- b. Unassigned forces of the US Military Services. Patrol aircraft from NAVAIRESFOR, as arranged through CINCLANT, will participate in surveillance operations.
- c. Other Federal agencies or departments. None.
- d. Allied nations. Colombia will attempt to infiltrate air and sea insurgent forces on the Caribbean coast of Colombia. These infiltrated forces will attempt to join exercise guerrilla forces already in-country. Friendly forces will conduct air/surface surveillance operations to track and intercept infiltrator forces at sea; or, failing that, with the cooperation of Colombian paramilitary forces, intercept them during landing or after ashore.

12. (U) Simulated Use of Nuclear Weapons. None.

13. (U) Coordination Effected with Other Unified, Specified, or Service Commands, Governmental Departments, Agencies, or Representatives Thereof. All pertinent exercise matters have been coordinated with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and LANTCOM. COMUSMILGP, Venezuela, has been informed of the plans for this exercise.

14. (C) Recommended General Public Information Policy.

a. Within the United States: No publicity. Release information only in reply to queries from news media. Replies to read generally: "As part of the previously scheduled Military Assistance Training Program, the United States is providing limited support for a routine surveillance/intercept training exercise being conducted in the Caribbean by Colombia. Similar exercises have been conducted in the past several years."

b. Outside the United States: Release of information to the Latin American news media and other areas outside the United States will be made by the Exercise Joint Staff Public Affairs Office of Colombia. US involvement in the exercise has not been widely publicized by the Colombians in previous years. US personnel in Colombia

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for the exercise will not initiate publicity; however, there will be no attempt to prevent US advisory personnel from answering questions of news media representatives. US personnel supporting the exercise will be briefed on USSOUTHCOM policy on this matter.

15. (C) General Policy Concerning:

a. Diplomatic information: Any US news release with diplomatic implications will be coordinated with the US embassy in the country concerned.

b. Psychological elements: None.

16. (C) Additional Remarks.

a. Any significant deviations from the above plans will be reported as they occur.

b. Assessment of what perception of US and Allied strategy and military capability the exercise will portray: None.

Prepared by:

LTC T. O. DUFF, USAF
LANT/SOUTH/AL-REDCOM Divison, J-3
Extension 73860

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